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They Saw

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They Saw

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2016 Poetry Editor's Choice Award

They Saw

by Emma Zyriek

They saw it on a Sunday,
saw it when his smile ran away
and wrinkled up to the sun;

The saw it never belonged on their living room couch.
On no, it danced,
danced in the pews and at the dinner table,
danced when the muffled phone calls grew louder and louder.

And when they cursed
they saw it enter his mouth and sound like a brass band,
and they heard him for the very first time.

He had only loved as he loved them; he spoke,
his voice calloused from the whispers of the blind.
And with this they covered him with their knitted blankets
so only God could shape what was beneath his skin.